(b) if so, thedetails of its.scope and terms of office;

(c) whether GIPSA has called Employees Unions/Associations for talks in Chennai on various dates in the last nine months;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decisions taken during the rounds of talk; and

(e) the details of expenditure incurred on the meetings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) General Insurers' (Public Sector) Association of India (GIPSA) is a voluntary association of public sector general insurance companies. The common problems, concerns and issues of the four companies are discussed and debated in the GIPSA forum. GIPSA is not a regulatory authority and its decisions are not binding on public sector insurance companies.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. GIPSA had invited Development Officers' Associations and Employees'/Officers' Associations for discussion on the role of Development Officers, re-structuring of offices. Retraining and deployment, transfer policy and mobility, customer services, working hours and days etc. These discussions provide an input for decisions on relevant issues by the Public Sector Insurance Companies.

(e) Expenditure incurred for organising these meetings was Rs. 10.65 lacs.

Restoration of damaged portion of Charminar

*209. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Hindu, Delhi, dated the 29th August, 2001, under the caption, "ASI repair work causes damage to Charminar".

(b) if so, the details of damage caused to Charminar due to scaffolding etc.; and

(c) the fresh steps taken / proposed to be taken by Government to restore the damaged portion of the Charminar at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b)No damage has been caused to the monument by the Archaeological Survey of India in the course of conservation and repairs.

(c)The portion of the structure, which had fallen from the minar recently has been restored.

Fall in ground-water level in Andhra Pradesh

*210 DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that the ground-water level in districts of Srikakulam and Chittoor of Andhra Pradesh has, gone down the level of more than four metres thereby making the situation alarming;

(b)if so, the details thereof; and

(c)the remedial measures Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Ground water levels in certain parts of the districts of Srikakulam and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh have declined by more than four metres. Decline in levels of ground water in certain parts of Srikakulam district last 10 years has been from 0.01 to 5.72 metres in pre-monsoon periods whereas in chittoor district, it has been from 0.27 to 4.39 metres in post-monsoon periods.

Water being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government to plan, finance and execute schemes for augmenting water resources. Government of India is also promoting rainwater harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof top rain water harvesting under various schemes. Various measures as initiated by the Central Government for water conservation and augmenting ground water resources are indicated below:—

(i) Constitution of Central Ground Water Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for regulation and control of ground water management and development.

(ii) Circulation of a Model Bill to all the States / Union Territories to